

NEW YORK

Saturday Evening Post

A POPULAR PAPER

FOR

PLEASURE AND PROFIT.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1873, by BEADLE AND ADAMS, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Vol. IV.

NEW YORK, MAY 10, 1873.

TERMS IN ADVANCE

One copy, four months, \$1.00.

One copy, one year, 3.00.

Two copies, one year, 5.00.

No. 165.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams, PUBLISHERS.
David Adams.

OLD HURRICANE

OR THE

Rossgrove unfolded the paper, held it to the fire and read.

emption as soon as the Indians' title was remitted in May of the following year.

They had been in the territory several days when we introduced them to the reader; and although their proceedings were in violation of the Government treaty with the celebrated chief, Black Hawk, they had obtained from the latter a private permit to select lands on certain conditions, which they endeavored to observe very strictly. But, despite all this care and precaution, they little dreamed of the dangers gathering around them.

Captain Rossgrove, the leader of the party, was about twenty-five years of age. He was a man of fine accomplishments, brave and handsome. A few days prior to his departure from home, he had wedded one of the fairest daughters of the land, and it was with a joyous heart he received the fond parting kiss of his young bride, and struck out to find them a home in the great West. And thoughts of his wife—or of her waiting and watching for his return—proved a keen spur to all acts and movements.

Nat Taylor, or Noisy Nat, as he was usually called on account of his inborn jocularity, was the eldest of the two hunters, being about forty years of age.

Wild Dick, as the other guide was called, was not over thirty years of age, and in form was small, but strong and wiry. He had attained the sobriquet of Wild Dick from the wild, starled expression always in his large blue eyes, and a nervous quickness in his movements not unlike that common to wild animals. Born and bred on the frontier, he had been schooled amid its wildest scenes and dangers; hence, he had imbibed much of the characteristic wildness of the woods and prairies.

As the hours wore away, the campfire became neglected in the all-absorbing stories of the two hunters, and at last the party found themselves in almost total darkness. However, it was replenished, and as its light reached out further and further into the gloom, it revealed to the eyes of the party an object hitherto unobserved.

"By snakes, it's a hornet's nest!" exclaimed Noisy Nat.

"So it is," replied Harry Dudley, the surveyor; "hadn't it better be removed? Its inhabitants might disturb our repose."

"No, Mr. Surveyor," replied Nat, "if we'll let the hornets alone, they'll not pester us. I have a natural love for the little critters. Why, boys, you wouldn't b'lieve me if I war to tell ye that such an insignificant thing as a nest o' hornets saved my skulp from a pack o' red-skins, one't."

"Humph! that's nothin'," ejaculated Wild Dick; "I saved a dozen or more lives one'st just by crookin' my fingers a few times, and so I'll tell ye 'bout it. You see I had a brother—a twin-brother, too, and we looked so much alike that I could hardly tell which was t'other. Eyes, hair, form and featur's war just alike."

"So here, Dick," interrupted Old Nat, "if you war so much alike, how do you know which one you are?"

"I'll tell you how. My brother Seth war deaf and dumb, but he warn't no fool, I can tell you. He learnt the mutes' alphabet—that is, he learnt to talk with his fingers. I learnt too, and so we could talk with our fingers just as fast as you and me can with our tongues, and that's sayin' a good deal. We war both livin' away up north, in a little shanty, and war engaged in huntin' and trappin'; for I'd have you know Seth war a tip-top hunter. One day I left Seth and went out into the woods to look after a b'ar-trap, and what should I do but run

into the clutches of about a hundred Ingins, on the war-path. They threatened to kill me, and scalp and play thunder in general unless I'd guide them, by the nearest known route, to certain fort which they wanted to destroy. You see they belonged a long ways to the south and weren't acquainted with the country. A thought struck me. I told 'em I'd show 'em the way if they'd let me go to my cabin first. They refused, so I concluded to die rather than betray my friends at the fort. When the reds seed I war in earnest 'bout dyin', they concluded to let me go to the cabin, but they war to go along, and threatened me with instant death if I spoke to any one at the cabin. I promised 'em I wouldn't, and fur fear of an accident, and to help cover my intentions, I had 'em put a piece of a blanket over my mouth, and then off we marched to the cabin. Brother Seth met us at the door. The Ingins paid no attention to him when they seed he couldn't speak, for they supposed he war demented, and you all know how a red-skin regards a crazy person. My escort didn't understand finger-talk, so while I was busy 'bout the cabin, gettin' my gun and knife and such things, I kep' up an animated conversation with brother, and never once did the reds suspect what war up. I told him the pickle war in, and what I had promised to do to save my life. So as soon as I had set off with the Ingins for the fort, Seth leant out too. He took a roundabout way and beat my Ingins that more'n two hours. Wal, to make a long story short, when them reds attacked the garrison, they got gloriously licked, and not one of the solers got a scratch. And that's how I saved the fort and several men by crookin' my fingers a few times."

"That's pretty good, Dick," said Captain Rossgrove; "but where is your brother Seth, now?"

"God only knows. I haven't seen him these five years, captain. The last I heard of him he war 'mong the Hudson Bay Fur men. He war a great pet of the'r'n, and the best trapper in the hull caboodle. I swar, boys—" and a tear moistened the eyes of the hunter,—"I'd give a good deal to see that boy. I think I've been a leetle keeless 'bout him. He couldn't get through the world like the rest of us, and I promised my ole dying mother I'd keep a watch on witness Seth, as he war always called, tho' he weren't witness by a long shot, I can tell ye. Poor Seth! Jist as soon as I git through with you fellers I'm goin' to see 'bout him, if Scarlet Death don't put a pink spot on my temple."

"Then you fear that reputed demon?" said Captain Rossgrove.

"Why shouldn't we all fear him? He deals death to both white and red."

"Then you really believe that there is such a creature as Scarlet Death, the Demon of the Des Moines?"

"B'lieve it! Why, Cap, I know it! Hav'n't I seed lots of his victims, and his hoof-prints on the earth?"

"That's so, Cap," added Noisy Nat; "I've witnessed the same myself."

"But never seen the Demon itself?"

"No, nor no one else. He's invisible. But that's no gettin' 'round that being such a critter, for he makes a good many burrys for the folks over on the "Dispute" and the Ingins."

"Well," said Rossgrove, "if this country is infested with devils, it will not be a healthy place for a colony."

"Wal, that's one demon sure, and he's tuff on the population," said Wild Dick. "We'll be apt to see his hoofprints before long, mebby."

"Then he is cloven-footed, eh?"

"Yes, makes a track like an ox; but that's only two tracks, else I'd think an ox, or suthin' of the kind, made the tracks. Ugh! It makes the chills creep over me."

"And why is the monster called Scarlet Death?"

"Because a small, round scarlet spot on the temple, just afore the ear, is the only mark he leaves upon a victim. He never breaks the skin or draws blood, but seems to strike with the deadly swiftness of the lightning's flash. What he strikes with, no one knows, but I do know—"

Further speech was here interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps. The next instant a stranger made his appearance within the radius of light from the gloom of the woods. He was a tall, villainous-looking fellow, with black, snaky eyes, a low, sullen brow, and rough, sensual face. He was dressed in the garb of an Indian, and the unceremonious manner in which he stalked into camp, convinced our friends that he was there with no friendly intentions.

"Good-evening, stranger," said Captain Rossgrove, in his free, cordial manner, rising to his feet, and advancing to meet the man.

"Well, good-evenin'," returned the latter; "but, then, you needn't stare a feller out of countenance. I'm sure I'm not such an object of curiosity."

"Hope you'll excuse our want of manners," said Rossgrove, in tone slightly tainted with sarcasm, "but whom have I the honor of addressing?"

"M. Jules Devreaux. I am business-agent of the Sacs and Fox Indians, and hold my appointment from the United States Government."

"Indeed! Glad to meet you, M. Jules Devreaux."

"Perhaps, when you learn my business here, you will have reason to change your mind."

"I hope your business is not of an unpleasant character. However, we are prepared to listen to whatever you may have to say," said Rossgrove.

"Well, sir," began the arrogant Frenchman, "I presume you are aware of your being trespassers on the Black-Hawk Reserve?"

"I know no such thing," replied Rossgrove;

"We are here by permit."

"By permit of whom?"

"One that has authority," replied the captain, "and we are taking no liberties that will conflict with the conditions of that permit."

"But they will with the treaty of your Government. This land belongs to the Sacs and Fox Indians, and for days have you been here chaining it, and setting up landmarks, without the permission of the rightful owners."

"The Indians have expressed no desire for us to leave, and we are only selecting sites for homes which we propose to build up when the Indians' title to these lands expires."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Devreaux, sarcastically; "you're a progressive set, to take time thus by the forelock, at the risk of losing your scalps. It's quite a year yet until the Indians' title to these lands expires, and when it does, we propose to renew our claim. Therefore, be gone at once!"

"Your insolence, sir," said Rossgrove, growing somewhat indignant at the man's insulting language, "is equal to your want of good sense, and—"

"That expresses it, Cap," chimed in Noisy Nat.

"If you wish to transact any business with us," continued Rossgrove, "you will do so in

Author "Hawkeye Harry," "Boy Spy," "Ironsides, the Scout," "Death Notch," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLAIM-STAKERS.

THERE were thirteen of them—all men in the prime of life, strong, robust and hardy-looking fellows, with rough, bearded and sunburnt faces, and eyes that shone with an honest light and the spirit of adventure. All but two were dressed in suits of brown jeans, which was, in a great measure, indicative of their nativity. The two exceptions were habited in the rude buck-skin garments so common to the hunter and trapper of the North-west.

Those in the homespun were a party of Kentuckians who had come from their southern homes, to select "claims" in the new territory, preparatory to "entering" them when the Indians' title to the land expired. Those in buck-skin were a couple of hunters in the employ of the claim-stakers, as guides and scouts.

It was a summer night in the year 1842. A campfire was burning in a dense forest bordering a large creek, in the south-west part of the then territory of Iowa, and within its light the little band of claim-stakers reclined in attitudes

of ease and repose, chatting, smoking and listening to their guides "spin yarns" of their adventures upon the border.

A number of fine-looking rifles reclined against the trunks of surrounding trees, while at one side lay a flag-pole, surveyor's compass and chain.

They were encamped upon a tract of land known as the Black-Hawk Reserve, belonging to the Sacs and Fox Indians. But in less than one year from that time, the title of the latter would expire, and the reserve be thrown open to the white man's occupancy.

Captain John Rossgrove, the leader of the claim-stakers, had, long before, conceived the idea of planting a colony in the new territory of Iowa, and having selected from his list of acquaintances such men as he knew would stand by him in times of danger and adversity, they struck out for the country of the upper Des Moines. The Black-Hawk Reserve attracted their attention, and having readily perceived its great natural advantages, they at once selected it as the land of their future home, and proceeded to locate and stake off claims, ready for pre-

wholly devoid of experience either—I've seen the Apache war-dance, and mazourked with Mexican girls, and swung around the circle with sea-beget Islanders, until I'm willing to brave a redowa, with Miss Stuyvesant's superior tact to cover deficiencies."

He proved he could dance very passably, however. Not with the elastic lightness of springy youth, perhaps, but in a manner which was creditable to fourteen lessons from a French master who had undertaken to drill this mature pupil into the mysteries and intricacies of the figures and steps in vogue.

"What a charming little sylph it is," thought Mr. Tracy, stooping his head to catch Coral's vivacious chatter. "Like mother like daughter, in more ways than one. I'm really inclined to think that I may find a recompense for the bitter disappointment of 'lang syne'."

Very well satisfied was Mr. Tracy in arriving at this conclusion. So we move along with the changing current. Hot-headed youth dashes and frets against the cool caution of middle age, but it is quite as willing to twist the next generation to selfish advantage without regard for the tender follies which are repeated again.

"You must let me fill at least one vacant space still," he said, as he scanned her tablets. "Um—um! Dolph met, and there he comes. Which shall it be, Miss Stuyvesant—how full your card is—say the fifth after this, a waltz it is?"

"To my own regret, I must refuse. The list is taken up until that, you will perceive, and there I stop—on mamma's account solely. I could dance on till daylight and never tire, but mamma is not strong, so we leave at an early hour. We must be having you at the house soon, Mr. Tracy."

"I shall be most happy. Who wouldn't be happy with such a prospect? By-the-by—Yes, Dolph, in a second—I see Miss Harland there, which reminds me I haven't paid my respects to her yet. Inexcusable, after being such close neighbors, of course. Perhaps her card may have a vacant place yet."

"Ruby's?" said Coral, taking Randolph Stuart's arm. "You'll find it all vacant, most probably. Ruby doesn't dance, I believe. Try the effect of your persuasions, though, by all means, Mr. Tracy. A young lady who can dance, and won't dance, should be made to do so."

She laughed over her shoulder as she moved away, and he sauntered slowly over to the spot where Ruby stood.

"Our queen doesn't dance, eh?" he soliloquized. "Odd. I thought every one danced nowadays. I wonder if the objection—whatever it may be—is quite insuperable. I have a fancy that such statuary repose could yield to a very pleasing grace of motion. Miss Harland," aloud, "permit me the pleasure. Gratified, I'm sure, to find you haven't quite forgotten me."

"What kind of memory do you credit me with possessing, Mr. Tracy? We forgot, and we forgot not—it may be convenient to make a sieve of our memories sometimes, but certainly not to the exclusion of yourself."

"Strain out our objectionable acquaintances—that might be desirable to some. I am thinking of other recreations now. Every one is crushing in the redowa—see the floor through! By the next will have thinned out. Will you favor me with a turn, then?"

"I very seldom dance, Mr. Tracy."

"Is it possible?" with a well-feigned air of surprise. Clive Tracy was back in his natural element after years of absence; the little arts of flirtation came readily as if he had walked in the light of women's eyes, and breathed soft flattery into women's ears, instead of tramping brakes and plains and deserts—as if he had studied the polite insincerities of the world, rather than its natural formations. "Not dance with such music? That alone should tempt you. This once, please."

The faintest of slow smiles dawned upon her lips, and her luminous dark eyes looked calmly back at him.

"Very well then, Mr. Tracy. The measure is changing, is it not?"

A few minutes later they were circling around the dancing-hall, which, as he had predicted, was emptied of half its Terpsichorean devotees. A couple admirably adapted to each other, moving with a calm disregard of the observation some directed toward them, but by no means after the manner of a few who drew laughing comment upon themselves.

"Good appearance, decidedly," drawlingly commented a bystander, staring at them hard through a glass, which was very evidently an affection; such restless, piercing, bright orbs as pertained to him are never otherwise than strong and keen. No other than Mr. Julius Wing.

"What a pity we can't have duchesses and countesses and the sort on our free Republican soil; she would make such a splendid 'my lady'—that Miss Harland. 'Pon my soul, I never saw any thing neater in the shape of the sex. There's the other one, the little Stuyvesant, who owes such an immense debt of gratitude to my humble self; she's one of your tender, loving little girls, bright enough, but can be read at a glance; but the Ruby has fine under the surface if it is smoldering just now. The dainty darling whose gratitude I won by saying her—crinoline—in the jam the other day, seems to be very well entertained—too well, in fact. Dolph Stuart has been hanging close all the evening. I haven't really determined to make any pretensions that way myself, but it's always as well to take the best advantage of an opportunity. Have played it around the governor rather closely already—an booked for a fair share of the business he can very well afford to throw over. We petty solicitors may be glad of any thing honest in the line. Those two young ones are stopping, I believe; let it go that way and it'll be a gone case on both sides in week's time. One thing I've invariably observed in these rapid-symptom love diseases—they're not particularly hard to cure. Now, more as a matter of principle than any personal interest, I think I'll break that *tete-a-tete*, which is certainly imminent."

The youthful couple had drawn back from the eddy of the crowd.

"Look at that," Randolph said, indicating the circle they had just left. "Tracy and Miss Harland, by all the gods! You are the one to whom honor is due in drawing him out, I believe. I'm willing to affirm after this that Circe's silken threads are more potent than the fiercest iron curb."

"One may lead where they can not drive, you know."

"And Tracy absolutely looks as though he rather enjoyed being led."

"Looks are deceitful, people say; I don't believe it. Who wouldn't enjoy it in his present position? I never saw Ruby look better, I think."

"The same remark is applicable to Miss Stuyvesant herself." It was the lawyer speaking at her side. "Dancing? That's an accomplishment I don't possess to my sorrow. Wish I did. It must seem stupid of me not to attempt even a quadrille with you, Miss Coral?"

"Very kind not to insist on it, Mr. Wing, considering your candid avowal."

"I imagined you might suppose I was slighting a sort of a claim, you know. Wouldn't think of losing my place in your good opinion for a half-dozen failures in the way of attempts. It looks easy enough."

"So it does," assented Coral, smiling, while Randolph gave him a look of cool inquiry which fell without impression upon his imperious self-possession. "That reminds me No, not you, Mr. Stuart. Three dances in succession—that would be an open violation of rules. Ah, there comes the recreant now."

Whoever it was led her away, and the little lover was left standing by the side of this tall young lover Coral had gained. Watching her at a distance, Stuart lost sight of his immediate surroundings for an instant.

"Best-dressed girl in the rooms," Wing's voice came to him as if from afar off. "Handsome too, according to my mind."

"Yes?" half-inquiringly, half-graciously.

"Rich, of course. She must be that to make such an appearance. To twist an old saw—wealth will tell; she has blood as well though, and of the old blue sort to judge by her name."

"Blood?—ah, yes?"

Mr. Wing gave him a keen glance, and began to stroke an imaginary mustache.

"My dear fellow," he drawled, "are you asleep? I repeat that Miss Harland has the best or the worst blue blood of the state—that is if she's one of the Harlands. Their chief characteristics were boldness, wickedness and wealth, I believe."

"Miss Harland—ah!—she is rich, I believe. At any rate she don't seem limited on money matters. I was there the other day when she asked for and received a cheque of four figures as coolly as if it had been no more than two. It takes wealthy persons to do that, I imagine."

"All I wanted to know," mused the lawyer, as Stuart turned away.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE TOOLS.

It was after dinner at the Stuyvesants. The drawing-rooms were alight, and the family gathered there; it was rather a notable incident for all to be assembled together as they chanced to be upon this evening. There were others also—Clive Tracy and Randolph Stuart and Mr. Wing. How the latter had secured his footing he knew; but there he was quite at his ease prepared to discuss weighty matters with Mr. Stuyvesant, pay homage to his wife, or play the devoted to either of the younger ladies.

Mr. Stuyvesant had settled back in the depths of a sleepy hollow of a chair, his face in the shadow, and was supposed to be napping; but he was watching a little group gathered about the sofa where Helene was reclining—Helene, with her still, sad, wistful face and melancholy eyes, supporting her cheek upon a hand so fragile and fair that it might have been waxwork, Coral, on a hassock, trifling over a book of engravings on her lap, but giving less attention to it than to the conversation and her companions; Mr. Wing looking insignificant in one of those great easy-chairs which were abundantly scattered about, and Dolph Stuart, one elbow on its high back, his tall figure inclined in lazy fashion, talking to the mother, but his dark eyes turning persistently to read the daughter's expression.

Ruby was at the piano away at the further end of the room, touching the keys softly with one shapely hand, while she talked with Clive Tracy at her side.

This town-house of the Stuyvesants was fitted with all the disregard of expense which long purses can command, and these drawing-rooms were models of luxury and refinement of taste. There were three rooms *en suite*, separated by arches and curtained with draperies silk and velvet. The whole three rooms had presented a brilliant vista as the party came in from the dining-hall, but Coral had drawn the curtains at one of the arches with the laughing declaration that so small a party would quite lose themselves in such longevity of space, Shrouded in by these falling draperies, seeming like a shadow among their shadows, her thin yellow hands moving stealthily over some knitting-work which did not require the attention of the pale eyes, sat Miss Lang. Mrs. Stuyvesant's companion had not dined with the company. She had come gliding in afterward, as was her custom, so silently as to have been scarcely observed by one, and ensconced herself in a nook where she was least liable to attract personal attention. It was her own choice to sit at hand should she be called upon, and though so unobtrusive, those cold, fishy orbs took infinite note of all which occurred within the rooms.

The first group occupied Mr. Stuyvesant's thoughts as well as his furtive observation.

"Little Coral, how happy she looks!" he thought. "Heaven preserve her from this wear of anxiety which grinds so heavily. And Helene was as bright once—scarcely so vivacious, but as happy. Lord forgive me for bringing such a blight upon her. But, I loved her so—I loved her so, and I have suffered—just God!—what retribution. What a life to have led I and she has hated me since that day, the first when I really thought I was winning her surely to me. What a pride it is to have upheld her so unchangeably! And that woman whose power over us is like a threatening sword which a breath may bring down, how she has kept her vow! Every hour has held its own weight of misery, and in moments when I have been unversed it seems that the fear of her must haunt me into my grave. My old strength is broken and weakened by it; I am not the man I should be at my age. This life of suspense is terrible, but Heaven help me if it be broken by that fear. My little Coral! may your life be held free from the taint of my wrong-doing. If harm comes to you—and it will come, for through you she can strike me the deadliest blow—if it comes—My God! the thought will craze me yet. To be read at a glance; but the Ruby has fine under the surface if it is smoldering just now. The dainty darling whose gratitude I won by saying her—crinoline—in the jam the other day, seems to be very well entertained—too well, in fact. Dolph Stuart has been hanging close all the evening. I haven't really determined to make any pretensions that way myself, but it's always as well to take the best advantage of an opportunity. Have played it around the governor rather closely already—an booked for a fair share of the business he can very well afford to throw over. We petty solicitors may be glad of any thing honest in the line. Those two young ones are stopping, I believe; let it go that way and it'll be a gone case on both sides in week's time. One thing I've invariably observed in these rapid-symptom love diseases—they're not particularly hard to cure. Now, more as a matter of principle than any personal interest, I think I'll break that *tete-a-tete*, which is certainly imminent."

The youthful couple had drawn back from the eddy of the crowd.

"Look at that," Randolph said, indicating the circle they had just left. "Tracy and Miss Harland, by all the gods! You are the one to whom honor is due in drawing him out, I believe. I'm willing to affirm after this that Circe's silken threads are more potent than the fiercest iron curb."

"One may lead where they can not drive, you know."

"And Tracy absolutely looks as though he rather enjoyed being led."

"Looks are deceitful, people say; I don't believe it. Who wouldn't enjoy it in his present position? I never saw Ruby look better, I think."

"The same remark is applicable to Miss Stuyvesant herself." It was the lawyer speaking at her side. "Dancing? That's an accomplishment I don't possess to my sorrow. Wish I did. It must seem stupid of me not to attempt even a quadrille with you, Miss Coral?"

"Very kind not to insist on it, Mr. Wing, considering your candid avowal."

"I imagined you might suppose I was slighting a sort of a claim, you know. Wouldn't think of losing my place in your good opinion for a half-dozen failures in the way of attempts. It looks easy enough."

of some superior make, I think. At any rate, though Ruby plays well always, there's something lacking which was complete there—some difference in her touch it would seem, and the impression conveyed."

"You are inclined to be critical, Miss Coral." It was Mr. Wing now. "How can you have the heart to criticize that 'molten, golden harmony?' Now, I should say that Miss Harland has magic in her finger-tips. Charming, that. Put to the test I fancy she might exercise her magic with the effect of 'molten, golden—'

something beside harmony—harvests, turn to substantial account."

"Make a music-teacher of her, do you mean? Poor Ruby!" laughed Coral, with a saucy French shrug. "Genius don't have a chance to rise much higher than that nowadays, Mr. Wing—or culture either. Fortunate Ruby isn't obliged to benefit by that flattering opinion and consequent suggestion of yours."

"You're satirical, Miss Stuyvesant. Won't you favor us next? That tender melody has been of only too short duration."

"Me?—after Ruby!" Worlds would not tempt me, Mr. Wing. There's more mischief than magic in my fingers, I'm afraid. There, Randolph, if you've done admiring that Alpine scene in a reverse position, we'll restore the mountains to their natural condition of standing upon their bases instead of their peaks?"

She laughed that she turned the loose page, and blushed to find that Dolph was looking at her rather than Alpine clefts and chasms and dreamlike scenes of nights.

"It's as well to take comprehensive views from all points of an object, Miss Coral," he answered, with the greatest composure. "Miss Ruby"—springing up as she came sweeping down the length of the room, chatting and laughing with Tracy—"we are discussing the propriety of crowning you with laurels. It's not a question of merit, but of means."

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, though it be no more than a laurel wreath. Disclaiming the responsibility, I fancy I should rather enjoy being invested with the power As to means emblematic—there!"

She stepped back a pace to a wide-mouthed, towering corner-vase, and broke a twig from the drooping greenery it held, twisting it deftly into shape, and dropping it upon her head. "Ruby!" cried Coral, sharply, "you have crowned yourself with willow. If you are destined to 'wear the willow,' what is to become of the rest of us?"

She affected a little shiver which was scarcely affection, after all. "Was it ominous?"

"Apropos of Germany, which suggests munitions, won't you favor us with that—whatever it was you played on your hidden instrument at Crag's Peak? I was just remarking that at all your wonderful playing, nothing ever affected me like that."

"At Crag's Peak? How stupid not to remember, and I have utterly forgotten now. It must have been an inspiration, I think; I ex temporize sometimes."

"Oh!" a little regretfully. "Be sure you let me know when the spirit moves you again, Ruby. It was the essence natural of music that day—such as conveys the warmth of the sunshine, the fragrance of flowers, birds' songs and winds' whispers, the roar of the storm and the sweep of the hurricane—if I did not know better, I should say that only one who has been tried in a fiery furnace, who has had depths stirred which we surface mortals seldom reach, could so master the diverse expressions. Of course it's the height of folly to associate any thing of the sort with Ruby, who was shut up with nuns, and after that in language schools, and painting schools, and music schools, all her life."

"Ridiculous, indeed!" Ruby's slow smile and languid air were the furthest remove imaginable from the tempestuous soul. Coral had breathed through that entrancing mountain melody—wild and warning through its bewildering influence.

"Quite possible," thought Mr. Wing, caressing his glossy whisker and favoring Miss Harland with a prolonged stare of admiration. "The depths are there, whether they've been stirred or not—I'm not so blind but I can see that."

And Mr. Stuyvesant, who had overheard the conversation, gave his lips a quick compression.

"Coral is right," he thought. "I knew then that it was Margray who played."

"Apropos of nothing, unless it be those influences which you describe as having been so powerfully conveyed, I fancy I'm impressed by the vague, weird attraction of moonlight," Dolph spoke softly as he clasped the volume. Coral had closed. "Suppose we test the fact, Miss Stuyvesant? Is there a moon? I'm sure of an alcove over there behind that drapery which a maid would be as nothing, and though so unobtrusive, those cold, fishy eyes

of mine could see through them?"

"How often do you consult an almanac, Mr. Stuart? There is a moon—and stars, too. How is our native poet's liquid melody runs?"

"And now, as the night is on—

As the star-dials pointed to morn—

At the end of our path a innocent

And a lonely station born—

Of which a marvellous crescent

Arose with a duplicate horn—

Astarte's bediamonded crescent

Distinct with its duplicate horn."

Poor Poe! I'm not very enthusiastic on the subject of poetry, but that wayward, unfortunate genius always calls my most enraptured sympathies into play. The remembrance of his frailties must die before the multitude can truly appreciate the brilliancy and beauty of his productions—it is reserved for the few to do that now. That is one of the world's failings; to individualize sentiments, I presume."

They had crossed the room and stood in the alcove whence Dolph's hand had looped back the curtains. They were half in shadow as seen from the rooms at their back, the pale sheen of moonlight touching their faces and shimmering away in broken drifts, but from without their figures were plainly defined against the brilliancy of gaslight—his, tall, boyish, but with the promise of muscular development; hers, supple, willowy, with a graceful poise suggestive of that lightness of motion which never fails in betokening a corresponding lightness of heart. Her fair face, with the bright hair floating away from it, was turned to look out and upward toward the clear, star-gemmed night sky, with the queen jewel set like a crescent against a glimmering shield; he turned toward her with a tender, dreamy smile hovering about his lips. It made a fair and pleasant tableau.

There was an unseen witness to it whom they did not suspect. Across the way, close under the shadows of the trees which lined the street, muffled in somber garments, a woman was standing. She remained motionless, watching the lighted window and the two figures framed within it. In that gloom the expression of her face was hidden, and the tall form might have been carved from stone.

"Very kind not to insist on it,

SHADOWS.

BY JOHNNIP DARE.

There are shadows in the evening,
There are shadows in the morn,
Shadows o'er the aged, dying—
Shadows on the child new-born;
Shadows in the light,
Misty shadows in the air.

Shadows—For, behind, around us,
There are shadows everywhere.

Sitting alone in my snug little room
At the close of a beautiful day.

A thought of the shadows came into my mind
And then how to drive them away.

I thought of the story of Ned, the mill-boy,
Who, once on the road met a ghost,

And was terribly frightened for nearly an hour,
Till he found it an ancient guide-post.

So 'tis with our shadows: we cover away,
And give our wild fancies the rein,
Till we're almost insane with terror and fear
Before reason comes back again.

"Tis said that the hour that comes near the dawn
Is the best of the day; but—
And as with shadows, the darkest are found
As we closer approach to the light.

So, friends, as we go on our pathway through life,
No matter by day or by night,
When the shadows are thickest, and hottest the
night.

Be sure you are nearest the light.

Barbara's Fate:

OR,

A BRIDE, BUT NOT A WIFE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,

AUTHOR OF "LOVE BLIND," "OATH BOUND," ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WIFE OR WIDOW?

At the door of the drawing-room Barbara

met Roy Davenal.

His inquiring glance was understood by her

as fully as words could have been.

"Yes," she replied. "He came, obedient to my summons, and, after he departed, I heard his footstep returning to the 'observatory'; if it was to renew our not particularly pleasant conversation, he will be disappointed; for I left just as he did."

Not a tremor of her eyelids or a quiver of the lips as she accepted his arm and entered the thronged rooms.

"Roy," she said, tenderly, "I can depend upon you not to mention the fact that I met Mr. De Laurian alone in the 'observatory'! I would not enjoy the petty scandal it might cause."

"I certainly shall not mention it, my dearest, unless it be to De Laurian himself at some convenient season after the bridal tour. He must apologize to me, Barbara."

She smiled brightly.

"I think that would be no more than right." They had reached the rear end of the drawing-room, where Blanche had held her little court since the wedding hour, and who now was rather anxiously consulting a tiny little watch, set in pearls, that depended, like a locklet, from the necklace at her throat.

"Oh, Barbara, I'm so glad you've come! I'm worried because Gervaise stays so long, and I'm ashamed to tell any one. I wonder where he went to? We'll surely lose the train."

Barbara laid her hand caressingly on Blanche's golden hair.

"The bridegroom has grown forgetful, has he? Probably detained by some bachelor friends over a parting glass of champagne. Isn't it cruel?"

She laughed down in the brown eyes, that wore a shadow "way down in their clear depths.

"Mamma thinks he should have come to escort me up-stairs; I ought to have changed my dress before now."

Why did not that loving, trusting girl read the fearful secret in those beautiful eyes that were smiling down into her own? Why did she not shrink in utter horror from under that cool, caressing hand? Or why did not some voice whisper in Roy Davenal's ear the awful truth as the beauteous woman leaned so confidently on his arm?

The hour was still afar off when the mask should fall.

"I am sure mamma Chetwynd is not nervous, whatever you are, little bride. Rest assured Mr. De Laurian is secure, wherever he is."

She only knew the hidden meaning conveyed in her own words.

During their brief conversation, the guests had gradually left the room, to fill the conservatory, music-room and upper chambers; and, as Roy excused himself to accompany a young gentleman to the billiard-room, Barbara took Blanche's shoulder.

"Come, and I will assist you now to don your traveling-dress. I think very likely Mr. De Laurian is in his room, preparing for the journey himself."

So, kindly and thoughtfully, Barbara assisted Blanche to her room, and then insisted on her in the easy-chair while she removed the veil, wreath, gloves, jewels and slippers.

"I am shivering dreadfully, Barbara. Is the register all open? I wonder what makes me so chilly?"

Her hands fell wearily to her side as Barbara withdrew the tiny white kid.

"Nothing but nervous excitement, my dear; I suppose all brides feel so."

And her own bridal rose up before her with a vividness that sent a pang shooting through her heart.

"I know so uneasy about Gervaise, Barbara. Why, I never heard of such a thing as a bridegroom deserting his bride so soon!"

"For a couple of hours?" Barbara then added, lightly, "perhaps it's the 'Curse, dear."

A scream fell from Blanche's lips.

"Oh, no! I have not dared let myself think of that alone! Oh, Barbara, what made you speak my own fears?"

But Barbara looked sternly at the frightened girl.

"They were idle, playful words, Blanche; and I am thoroughly ashamed of you."

The tears gathered in Blanche's eyes.

"I know I'm childish; but something is wrong, Barbara; I feel it here."

She laid her hand on her breast, and then arose from the chair to exchange her white robes for the garnet velvet suit, of which one of her traveling-suits was made.

Her toilet was made quickly, and then Barbara paused before her in earnest scrutiny.

"How beautiful you are, Blanche! peace be with you!"

And then she went out from the dressing-room, swallowing a sob as she closed the heavy walnut door.

In the hall she met Mrs. Chetwynd, anxious and somewhat flurried.

"Barbara, it is very strange, but where can Gervaise possibly be? No one has seen him for an hour or more."

Barbara raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"Is that so? I saw him myself less than an hour ago, and gave him a letter one of the servants had for him."

"You did? And where was he?"

"In the dining-room; and when he asked me for the quietest room in the house to read his letter, I mentioned the observatory."

"The observatory!" echoed Mrs. Chetwynd, with almost a sob of relief. "Of course the poor fellow has gone there to read his letter and fastened himself in—I've heard of the curious spring in the door."

She hastened off to tell Mr. Chetwynd, and together they went up the stairs that led to the fatal room.

Mr. Chetwynd was not a second unfastening the door; he pressed in, followed by his wife and Barbara, and then—

A horrid scream from Barbara, echoed by Mrs. Chetwynd, resounded through the Chase; with tottering tread, Mr. Chetwynd crossed the intervening space and laid his hand on De Laurian's icy cold forehead.

But it needed not that to tell the awful truth; for the glassy, vacant eyes, wide open in a trance of horror, the rigid attitude, had revealed the fact that the first installment of the Curse had already fallen on poor Blanche's innocent head—as she sat below, all unconscious that she was a widowed bride, waiting for him who would never come, to begin the bridal tour they never would have.

And Barbara Lester's heart thrilled with wild triumph!

CHAPTER XIX.

A LOST LOVER.

DAY after day of that pitiful bridal season wore away, each fraught with new grief and loneliness.

The inquest had been held at Chetwynd Chase, and the verdict, substantiated by the opinions of eminent physicians, was that Gervaise De Laurian had come to his death by a sudden attack of heart-disease, to which he had been long predisposed, and which was immediately superinduced by the inopportune arrival of a harassing business communication, that at any time might have ill affected him.

People were loud in the praises they bestowed upon the dead man's memory; they tenderly sympathized with the bereaved bride; spoke touchingly of the blow that had killed him—the knowledge that he had that he was a poor man, all unfit to wed the daughter of the house of Chetwynd Chase.

The papers filled columns with a sensational version of the story, and everybody from Maine to the Pacific coast was familiar with the sad facts. Then they buried him, in almost royal pomp, in the family vault, that was built in a cypress grove on the De Laurian estate.

Later, a new excitement followed; his executor published a card affirming that after a full and searching settlement of deceased's affairs, it was found that but one mortgage existed—and that only to the trifling amount of eight thousand dollars, which Mr. De Laurian would have readily paid when due, which would not yet occur for several weeks. The estate was otherwise unencumbered.

Then what meant that letter the wiseacres declared had been the means of his death? Gradually, vague suspicions began to arise; the letter had been a forgery, then, but for what purpose, and executed by whom?

And somehow, no one ever knew who started it, came the impression that there had been foul play; perhaps, after all, Mr. De Laurian had been put out of the way; and, as there certainly had been not a mark of violence on his person, the means used had been internal ones—in plain words, people began to believe Mr. De Laurian had been poisoned.

Arrangements were made to have his body removed from the vault; the arrangements were completed, and, while the excited public were awaiting further developments, there burst on them like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, the appalling news that Mr. De Laurian's body had been removed from the vault, and the coffin left untenanted!

Nine days of wildfire excitement; days of wonder, suspicion, distrust and indignation; and then, baffled and disappointed, the world settled down with another unsolved mystery hanging to its skirts.

Wearily and heavily the days dragged on at Chetwynd Chase; to the pallid girl-bride, whose pitiful grief was extremely touching to see; to the stricken parents who plainly saw the skeleton fingers of Lady Constanza's Curse in the great blight that had come upon them.

And then, while she—this jealous and dangerous woman—with a heart of living flame, was counting the hours to his return, he had decided that when they met again he would return her his plighted troth.

And so, this strange, almost imperceptible change fired, her with a regretful anguish, Mightier even than the quick, hot passion she had entertained for De Laurian—but that would have saved her had he so willed it—was this love that had surged up and back, for Roy Davenal; she must center her affections on some one; such women are doomed to love—or curse—with their affections in a whole-souled, absorbing manner.

And Roy—we know how for years he had rushed madly on; bewildered, infatuated with her glorious beauty.

How all this change had come about, he only realized when away from the dazzling light of her eyes, and the witching sound of her voice.

When with her, he was so proud that she was all his own—poor, deluded man—and, instead of breaking the meshes of the net that enslaved him, he suffered the cords to grow firmer and stronger.

At length—so sudden and sharp the rending asunder came that it terrified himself—his goddess was dethroned, and he knew, for a fearful truth, that she was a woman whose hands were not the hands he ever should clasp at the altar.

It had happened very simply, naturally, quite in the ordinary course of affairs—if that can be called "ordinary" that crushes a confidence of years and uproots a love that has grown with a man's youth and strengthened with his strength. He had read the papers; he had learned all the particulars, and then he had grown to speculating on the ghastly subject.

He plainly recalled the careless lie Barbara had told Blanche as she leaned on his arm; he had been surprised then; but now it wore a far different aspect. He remembered of what a willful, passionate nature Barbara had ever been; he knew De Laurian had had a stormy interview with her; she admitted he had grossly insulted her, and that she should punish him.

This had annoyed him from the moment he had heard of De Laurian's death; but the inquest had satisfied him—or rather, he had forced himself to be content therewith, and gone back to his Western home with only a sad gravity of manner that was naturally attributed to the distressful state of affairs.

Then had come the suggestions of poison—that had horrified him; then the fact of the forged letter; and he groaned in very anguish as the awful suspicion would thrust itself upon him; and when, later, he learned that the body had been stolen from its sacred resting-place, he knew, for a sickening verity, that Barbara Lester had had the deed done to cover her own guilty tracks.

It was appalling; yet what could he do? tell his honest suspicions to the world, and brand her, whom he had so worshipped, a murderer? help with the hands that had so often caressed her, to fasten the hangman's rope around that dainty throat? He could not; it would not bring De Laurian back, or heal Blanche Chetwynd's broken heart—poor, poor Blanche!

And then his fingers refused to let go the letters he was so wont to write; "a rush of business," he told Barbara, prevented long letters; when he came in October to Chetwynd Chase, he would see her once more.

Ah, little did Barbara think, as she dreamed of and waited for his coming, that he, pacing his floor on restless, sleepless nights, was struggling and fighting with himself to banish the last remnant of love for her.

And then, while she—this jealous and dangerous woman—with a heart of living flame, was counting the hours to his return, he had decided that when they met again he would return her his plighted troth.

He suffered her to lead him to the sofa, and then, when he had seated himself, she drew a hassock to his feet, and seating herself, leaned her elbow on his knee.

He did not yet speak; he was scrutinizing her varying features.

"Have you no greeting for me, Roy?"

She murmured his name in tones of liquid tenderness, as she raised her eyes to his.

"I surely neglected my duty if I failed to do so."

The tones, though courteous, were decidedly distant, and she instantly perceived it.

"Roy—what have you come to tell me?"

Why do you speak so formally to me? Are you angry with me, dearest? Have I offended you?"

"If I have, you can punish me no more severely than by being so stern."

"I did not mean—that is, I did not think you would care," returned Roy, hesitatingly, for now that the time had come, he dreaded arousing her temper.

"But I do care, Roy, darling. How could it be otherwise when I love you so; when every word you utter goes straight to my heart, and is never forgotten?"

He did not say a word, and the girl was silent.

He then spoke again.

"I will not speak; but you have sent me to you."

He shivered as he heard her words.

"But suppose that were the news I had to communicate?"

Like a lightning-flash she sprung from her low seat, her eyes glowing with excitement.

"Then I'd murder you, Roy Davenal!"

"Barbara—No! I can not listen to such language. I will leave you till you are calm."

He arose and bowed coldly.

"No!—stay, I will be calm. Stay, Roy, and tell me what it is I must hear. For your sake I will be calm."

As by magic, her anger died away under the swift-returning tide of love.

Reluctantly he reseated himself; and when she laid her warm, thrilling fingers on his hand, he wondered how he could tell her. He pitied her at that moment from the bottom of his heart.

Wearily and heavily the days dragged on at Chetwynd Chase; to the pallid girl-bride, whose pitiful grief was extremely touching to see; to the stricken parents who plainly saw the skeleton fingers of Lady Constanza's Curse in the great blight that had come upon them.

He had fully come to know that she was the last woman in all the world to be his wife; and, in the six weeks that followed his return to the Chase—those six weeks in which his devotion to Barbara gradually slackened, and which Barbara noted—in these six breezy, delicious weeks, Roy Davenal had learned a new, strange lesson that he feared to teach Barbara.

Yes, he actually dreaded telling her all the truth: he reasoned that the woman who would unhesitatingly and deliberately destroy a fellow-being for a mere personal affront—of course he did not know the depth of Barbara's injuries; even had he, he was not the man to justify the murder he solemnly believed to have been committed—would not hesitate at displaying equal mercilessness to one who justly would demand her indignation.

and lifted up two of the boards of the floor. A short ladder went down into a pit that seemed to be dry; it was thickly floored with fresh straw, and was some eight or nine feet square.

"Here is a snug chamber," said the dame, laughing; "dry and warm, I can tell you, for I have used it for barrels of flour and vegetables. You will find flour in the corner yet. If you are afraid, I can put you down here and draw the boards over you. Nobody knows of this but myself and Eunice."

They retired early that night, and the two young girls, as well as little Eunice, were soon buried in slumber. The old woman was restless. In spite of the encouragement by which she kept up the spirits of her guests, her own fears were awake. She did not like the story of the man questioning the child. She let the kitchen fire burn low, the logs smoldering in the ashes, and put up boards before the windows. She listened long and anxiously for noises without; but all was silent and dark. Then she lay down without undressing, and gradually lost herself in sleep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HALF-BREED'S SPOIL.

SEVERAL hours must have passed, for the dame felt refreshed, as by a full night's rest, when she started up all at once wide awake. She had dreamed, or fancied she heard, something to frighten her, but she was cautious not to awake her young companions.

She rose and went to the window looking on the road, applying her ear to the narrow crevice between the boards. After some minutes she distinctly heard footsteps. They came nearer and nearer; they were evidently stealthy. They stopped just before the door, then seemed to go round the house. The dame stole to the door that opened into the garden. Again she heard the footsteps move audibly now as they rustled among the dried weeds. Then a careful hand was laid on the latch, and an effort was made to open the door softly.

Convinced now that marauders were upon them, the dame hastily awakened the girls, whispering to them to dress as quickly as possible. From the window next the road she now heard other footsteps, and could see the gleam of a lantern among the bushes. The trembling girls, who had put on their dresses, clung to her in deadly fear, and proposed that they should all escape through the garden to the hut of their neighbor.

"'Twill be of no use," she answered. "You would only run into danger. They are all around the house."

"They!" exclaimed Helen. "Is there more than one?"

"Ten of 'em at least. You can hear for yourselves."

The sound of many footsteps could indeed be heard. Presently a bold rap came upon the door.

"What shall we do?" whispered the terrified Helen. "Shall we ask their protection? They can not all be Ulric's friends."

"Do as I bid ye," responded the old woman. "It is me they come for. They have been threatening me ever since Giuseppe's brindled cow went mad, and Gramo's pigs were drowned. They will have it that I bewitched 'em. The end must come, sooner or later; and 'tis as well not to live in fear. Take up the child."

Louise had lifted the little girl in her arms, and wrapped her clothes about her.

"Now you three must hide."

She strode into the chamber, drew aside the heavy bedstead, and lifted the boards that covered the pit. All this time raps were heard at the door, with intervals of silence.

Louise stepped back, that Helen might go down first. The dame clutched her arm.

"You must promise me one thing!" she whispered, in a solemn and emphatic manner. "They may kill me. You must promise to take care of Eunice."

"I promise," Helen eagerly replied. "She shall be like my own child, or my little sister."

She clasped the child in her arms.

"Go, then, and luck go with you! You dare not break your word!" said the grandmother.

"I trust you. Quick; they will break down the door!"

She pushed Louise after the others, flung down a coverlet from the bed, and hurriedly replaced the boards and the bedstead.

There was now impatient beating at the door, and clamorous voices demanding admittance.

"Wait a minute—will ye?" the dame called, while she raked out a coal from the ashes, and lighted a candle. Then she went and unbolted the door.

Three or four men stood outside, chafed to anger at her delay. They began to abuse her for a stubborn old witch; and ordered her to come along with them to a safer place, where such birds could be caged.

She declared herself ready to go, though they could produce no warrant for her arrest. Their brutal voices drowned her complaints, as they promised more summary justice on the sorceress than the slow authorities could furnish.

"Let me lock up the cabin," she pleaded. "I don't want thieves here to steal the little I have."

"Much good it will do you, old cat!" was the answer, "if you get your deserts; a drowning in the nearest pond, or a swing on the first bough; that is what you ought to have!"

"Stop!" exclaimed a voice, as they were leading away the old woman; and the man who held the lantern, giving it to some one else, strode forward. "There are more of them in the cabin!"

He stepped in, then called for the lantern. It was brought to him, and he searched the hut. No one was seen.

"Let us begone!" said another of the men. "It will be daylight presently."

"Where are the two girls you had with you, old witch?" the other demanded. The dame looked at him defiantly, and kept silent.

"Do you want me to throttle you?" he asked, menacingly.

"You can do as you choose," she answered.

"Tell me, where are those girls? You need not deny that they were here with you. I saw them myself—both of them."

"I shall tell you nothing about them. You can make chase if you like; or they may reach the village, and escape you."

"They have not left the hut. Here, one of you, hold the lantern, while I look around."

He threw open the doors of pantry and closet; searched every corner; then began sounding the log walls and the floor. It was not long before he uttered a cry of discovery. He had found the loose board under the bed.

A diversion had been effected outside by the appearance of old Milo, with his gun, to the rescue. But he was presently overpowered, and his weapon taken from him.

Meanwhile the half-breed, Ulric—for it was he—had called for assistance to secure the young captives. They were dragged one by one from the bidding-place they had fancied so secure. The voices of old Milo and the dame were heard remonstrating against the molestation of two innocent travelers, who had but sought refuge from the persecutions of the villain who now tried to recapture them.

"They are witches, too!" the half-breed

roared, lustily. "I can prove it! Witches of the worst sort—taking the form of pretty young girls! And here is the imp, the familiar of the old witch! Tie them fast; gag them, if they will not hold their tongues; and let us get away. Bind and gag that howling old fellow and leave him in the cabin. He is bewitched; that is what all is!"

His orders were quickly obeyed. Where the superstitious fears or the rage of ignorant men can be appealed to, they will acquiesce in the most brutal deeds; and Ulric had spent the preceding day in stirring up the vindictive passions of men who believed they had suffered in person or property from the supposed sorceress.

Before the first faint gleams were seen in the eastern sky, the men, with their helpless captives, were on the way to the place selected for their imprisonment.

The poor old man, fast bound and gagged, was left lying on the puncheon floor, and the cabin was fastened up.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE YOUNG KNIGHT'S RISE.

As we have mentioned, young Walter Ormsley was not long in tracing Helen. The dame of the Stone Castle was as good as her word; in a few hours she sent a note by a messenger to inform the lover whether the captive had been conveyed.

He went immediately to Sliaman's house, and was there completely deceived by the apparent sincerity of the lady; though he did not believe for a moment that the carriage sent for her came from his father's house. He rather suspected Querodos of the contrivance to get her again into his power, and rode back in all haste to enforce his demand on the outlaw, whom the wound he had given still kept in his bed.

Walter saw his wife once more. Her assurances that no one had been sent for the girl only half convinced him; she might have been taken elsewhere, he thought; and with eager anxiety, he again invoked the aid of the authorities, and set men searching in every direction.

They found the bloody stiletto in the wood, and the rope, with traces of a conflict; and noticed, too, that the carriage-tracks went no further. If brought here, she had been taken back, or killed with the weapon picked up and buried in the woods.

The anguish of the unhappy young man moved the sympathies of the neighbors. At this time he was joined by Stephen, who had been sent from home to help his young master, as soon as they had received his message.

Steve was of opinion that the outlaw chief would not dare tempt the vengeance of the community by further persecution of the girl, now that the authorities were on the look-out. Some one else had practiced the deception upon her, and who could it be but that desperate villain, the half-breed, Ulric Boyce?

And I heard of the fellow having crossed the river, only night before last," Steve added. "With whom?"

"Alone, but in a great hurry, and sore with a stab in the shoulder; so the Indian told me," said the man. "What more likely than that he got the hurt by attacking the wagon, from Miss Helen's driver?"

"Do you know which way he went?"

"To Ongar, I should think; the ferry is on the road."

"Then let us go directly."

It was late in the afternoon; but they hurried on. The man who owned the boat confirmed the story of Ulric's having crossed. The half-breed could not be easily forgotten by any one who had seen him; and the description was well recognized.

The minutes seemed hours till Walter and his faithful attendant were on the other side of the stream, and on the way to the village of Ongar. Arrived there, it was necessary to use caution in making inquiries, and Steve took the lead.

He ascertained that Ulric Boyce had his quarters in the small tavern. This they visited after dusk. Steve was ordered to watch outside, while Walter, trusting to the disguise of his fur cap and collar and the dim light, resolved to encounter the enemy.

He assumed a swaggering gait as he entered the tavern, ordered a glass of punch, and advanced to the dining-room. The landlord interposed, saying that the room was occupied by a private party; but it was too late. Walter flung the door wide open, and saw the man of whom he was in search, seated at supper, having just finished some talk with one of the hands about the tavern, who went out at once, and then came forward with a bow and an apology to the "gentleman" for his intrusion; throwing himself into a chair at the other end of the table, and heartily inviting the half-breed to take share of the punch that was coming.

He could not linger a moment, for fear of incurring the suspicion of the villain he meant to outwit.

All was dark and silent in the rancheria when young Ormsley set out with Ulric to walk to the barn of which he had spoken. Boyce had ordered his horse fastened in a cluster of trees by the roadside near the barn, but out of sight, should the conspirators come that way. He pointed out the old frame building looming up against the dark sky, as they approached it after half an hour's brisk walk.

"Keep close to me," whispered the half-breed. "I may want your help to secure the girl I mean to save and carry off."

"Then she will not go with you willingly?"

"It was the youth's mental comment, 'even to escape death!'"

He had a wild idea of suddenly throttling his companion, and then rushing to snatch his darling from peril. But a glance at the robust frame of the man beside him, and the thought of the burly sentinel left to guard the prisoners, convinced him there would be danger of failure in the rash attempt.

"And then, what would become of my dear girl?" he thought.

They had now got so near that they could distinctly see the outline of a man seated on a log close to the corner of the old frame barn.

"He must be managed," whispered Ulric. "I leave him to you; that is what I brought you for. You can surprise him, and I will help you tie his arms."

He produced a stout rope. The man at the door was whistling a tune, unsuspicious of danger near. Presently he threw his head back as if composing himself to sleep.

"Now—now's your time!" whispered the half-breed.

But, before the young man could spring upon his unsuspecting foe, a clutch was laid upon his arm, and a prolonged gasp from Ulric told him that something had fallen out to overturn his plans.

"Listen!" he whispered, hoarsely.

There was a trampling at a short distance of many feet on the ground; a confused murmur, half-suppressed, of human voices!

Even while they listened, the noise came closer and closer, and a score of dusky forms were beside them.

In the faint starlight Walter could see that the men were armed with clubs. One carried a lantern. A formidable array of rioters, come to attack the two on a few helpless women already their prisoners!

"I don't know. You shall see her if you lend a hand to my work. I want help."

"What is to be done? I'm your man."

"Well, you just follow me, and do as I bid you. As I told you, the women are safe in the barn; but the *alcade* has heard that something is up, and has ordered the men who captured the witches to be arrested if they can be found. Nobody will stir in the matter to-night!"

"But we will be ahead of the *alcade*, eh?" queried the youth, sharply.

"We must be. Some of the men who have

lost their cattle and fowls, are determined to burn the witches out to-night."

"To burn—"

"Yes—to set fire to the barn where they are tied up."

"And you?"

All Walter's self-control could not prevent his drawing his breath with a gasp—for some powerful intuition told him Helen had part in this danger.

"Stop that!" shouted Ulric. "Too much risk! We shall have the constables down on us. No firing, no burning! Give me a hatchet."

He took a hatchet from one of the men, and commenced hacking at the huge door of the barn.

Shouts from various eager questioners demanded what he meant. The rioters would not be cheated of their prey! Nothing but fire could destroy witches!

Walter had torn another hatchet from the grasp of one of the men, and was splitting the boards of the door.

There was a wild uproar among the rioters, and a running to and fro.

They were not at all pleased with the interference that threatened to balk their savage vengeance. Ulric had raised the storm in appealing to their mad passions; he was now to reap the whirlwind.

He strove to allay the tempest; he declared his intention to bring out the prisoners and make them walk hot plowshares; he called on the men to sing hymns by way of countering incantations, while he went in to complete the work so well begun.

He was answered by cries and execrations. He was resolved, as soon as the door could be forced, to save Helen and carry her off, leaving the others to their fate.

While the rioters were wrangling and clamoring—some shouting for the key which could not be found, and some roaring that the barn should be fired—young Ormsley was vigorously demolishing the door. He heard the screams of women in the interior answering the shouts of their brutal persecutors. At last he succeeded in forcing an entrance, at the same time with some one else.

The other one was Ulric, and he lost no time in cutting the prisoners' bonds.

"You can make your escape now," he called to them in hoarse whisper. "Helen, I have come to save you!"

"I will not go with you!" answered a voice which thrilled to Walter's inmost soul. "Let go my arm! I will perish in the flames first!"

The red light flickered through the crevices between the boards on the other side, and wild cries burst from the rioters. They had fired the barn!

As the gleam flashed up, Walter caught sight of Helen pale and scared, her hair floating back, struggling in the grasp of her cruel enemy. The next instant all was dark again.

"Helen! Helen!" Walter shouted, in mad anxiety. "This way! I am here to save you!"

"Oh, Walter! Walter!" he heard a voice cry. He rushed toward it, and clasped a light form in his arms.

"Go with him! Go with him!" cried the old dame. "Eunice, cling to me. We will escape, or die together, my child."

Amid the wild yell of the rioters, the crackling of the rising flames, and the rain of blows aimed at random, the prisoners were dragged out of the barn.

Their enemies were on the other side, and the shadows were the blacker for the lurid light in one spot, so that they could not yet be seen in the obscurity.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 155.)

"Very true," responded one of the men; "but we want it over. The light will not be seen. Come on there!"

The man with the lantern advanced. He held in his hand a bundle of dry sticks and shavings, which he put down beside

dom had seemed close at hand, as one by one his wit had removed the obstacles between him and liberty, yet he had not bettered his position in the least, and was still in deadly peril.

The sudden appearance of the witness had not surprised the Judge in the least. He had guessed from Talbot's manner that he had some proof in reserve.

Rackensack leered insolently at York as he came forward. The look told the prisoner that he had been betrayed. The great muscles in York's frame rose and fell, and his anger made him for the moment almost insane with passion. Had York's arms been free, Rackensack would never have opened his lips to denounce his master, for York would have strangled him on the spot.

"You appear as a witness in this case?" the Judge asked, looking with his searching eyes into the face of the burly ruffian.

"Wal, I reckon I do," Rackensack replied, with a chuckle; "but, Judge, that's a little master, for York would have strangled him on the spot."

"Judge, I have promised this man that if he would turn State's evidence and tell all he knows regarding the road-agents he should go free. I suppose the court will be willing to abide by that agreement," Talbot remarked.

"I suppose that it would be difficult to prove the guilt of the prisoners beyond a doubt in any other way," the Judge rejoined.

"Almost impossible, Judge," Talbot added. "They have covered up their tracks so well that the only evidence of one of the gang will convict them."

"The court agrees to the bargain then. Tell us all you know about these two men and they shall go free," the colonel declared, decisively.

"Now you bit me when I live!" the ruffian exclaimed, with a wince at York, who was glaring at him with eyes full of rage. "Now, first and foremost, I'm one of the road-agents."

"Belonging to the band of Rocky Mountain Rob?" the colonel asked.

"Yes, sir!" Rackensack replied.

"And where is Rob?" the Judge questioned.

"Can you tell where he is to be found?"

"I'll bet yer I kin," the ruffian answered, confidently.

"Go ahead."

"Thor he is!"

And Rackensack pointed to York.

A murmur of astonishment came from all within hearing except Talbot and the Indian.

Even the colonel, sitting in judgment, was astonished. He could hardly believe it possible that, at the first scoop of the net, the Vigilantes had caught the dreaded outlaw chief.

"That man, Jim York, is Rocky Mountain Rob?" the colonel demanded, in amazement.

"That's so, or I'm a liar!" Rackensack exclaimed.

York was white with rage.

"Judge, that fellow is brought to swear my life away!" he cried, hoarse with passion. "What reliance can you put on the word of a self-confessed villain such as he is? To save himself he would sacrifice me. You cowardly hound! If I had my hands free, I'd choke the life out of you!"

"Mabbe you would, an' mabbe you wouldn't!" Rackensack retorted, defiantly. "I reckon that Judge Lynch's rope will choke you before you git a chance to choke anybody!"

"You declare this man to be the road-agent chief?" the colonel asked.

"And the cannonade had quite ceased.

Then Inez knew, as well as the great captain could have told her, that the day had gone against her countrymen.

What was she to do, whither to fly?

The irregular and fitful fire still maintained by the small-arms announced that her father must be still resisting, after the loss of his guns, with the remainder of his infantry; but the increasing crowd of fugitives who came running along, some with arms, some without, gave plain token that the combatants could not be far off.

Here were grouped a number of frightened domestics, the women screaming, the men talking together. She saw the street, in the brief instants that intervened, full of people, and more swarming out of the houses, and fleeing toward the port. A number of soldiers without arms, many wounded, all pale with terror and evidently demoralized, hurried along in the crowd.

"Stay there, Pepita! The foreign devils will eat you alive!"

"You bet!" Rackensack replied, decidedly, "and Kangaroo that is one of 'em too. I was an honest man afore I run afoul of the devils, but they 'suaded me into jining 'em, but my conscience is a-gittin' tender, an' I can't travel with them 'pilgrims' no longer, so I makes a clean breast of it."

The outlaw intended this speech to be of an affecting nature, and was naturally indignant, when some of the miners snickered at the idea of his having such a thing as a conscience; and Rackensack scowled at the crowd, at which they only laughed the more.

"I say that the fellow lies!" cried York. His face was white, and the big veins were standing out like knotted cords upon his temples. It was evident that he fully realized his peril. "To save his own worthless carcass he'd swear anybody's life away. Judge, are you going to convict me on the word of a scoundrel like that?"

"See here, York, it seems to me that you're a difficult man to suit," the colonel answered. "You object to the Indian's evidence because he's a savage, and to the Chinaman's because he's a heathen. You call for a white man's evidence. We give you a white witness and now you ain't satisfied. York, you're guilty, and all your twisting and turning won't save you."

"An' of you ain't satisfied, Judge, just s'arch him!" Rackensack exclaimed. "You'll find one on the buck-skin bogs that the Chinaman had their gold-dust in on him. I seed 'em with the bag in his pocket this morning."

York's breath came thick and fast; already he felt the death-noose tightening around his neck.

From the pocket of York's coat Talbot drew a yellow buck-skin bag, which the Chinaman quickly identified as being one of the bags stolen from him by the masked ruffians the night before, at the Chinese Camp; and to still further strengthen the chain of guilt, Moses, the Jew storekeeper, testified that the bag was one of a half-dozen that he had sold to the Chinaman.

Valm, like a hunted beast, York sought for some avenue of escape. The evidence against him was too strong to be broken down. Oh, how bitterly he cursed the folly which led him to the Bar! The foolish passion for the girl, Bessie, had blinded his better judgment and given him, like Sampson of old, helpless into the hands of his enemies. A woman's face had betrayed him to death.

"The evidence is conclusive," the colonel pronounced, coldly. "Have you any thing to say, James York, why sentence of death should not be passed upon you?"

With a last desperate effort, York strove to avert the fearful doom that was so near.

"Again I say that I am the victim of a foul conspiracy. This man, Talbot, has sworn my death! He was afraid to meet me in a fair and open fight, man to man, but has contrived this plot so that other hands can take the life that he dares not attack. The Indian and this patrician both have been bought to lie against me. As for the buck-skin bag being found in my pocket, I have been a helpless prisoner in the hands of this man, Talbot, for at least three hours! How easy it would be for him to slip the bag into my pocket. It's all a lie, and if you hang me, I'm a murdered man!"

"Judge!" cried Talbot, quickly and sharply. "I take it that you are going to hang this man. He was afraid to meet me in a fair and open fight, man to man, but has contrived this plot so that other hands can take the life that he dares not attack. The Indian and this patrician both have been bought to lie against me. As for the buck-skin bag being found in my pocket, I have been a helpless prisoner in the hands of this man, Talbot, for at least three hours! How easy it would be for him to slip the bag into my pocket. It's all a lie, and if you hang me, I'm a murdered man!"

"Injun willin' to be hung," said the chief, grimly. It was evident that the savage had little doubt as to the issue of the conflict.

"It can not be," the colonel replied, shortly. "James York, you are duly convicted of being Rocky Mountain Rob, the road-agent, and Kangaroo with being a member of his band, and the sentence of this court is that in half an

hour's time you be hung from the nearest tree until you are dead, and may God have mercy on your guilty souls."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 152.)

The Sea-Cat: OR, THE WITCH OF DARIEN,

A STORY OF THE BUCCANEERS.
BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "RED RAJAH," "DOUBLE-DEATH," "ROCK
BIDEH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SACK.

DONA INEZ sat in her chamber listening to the reports of the cannon, and wondering how the battle was going. The streets below her were deserted, for the women and children were all hiding in the houses, and the able-bodied men were in the field.

Since she had seen her father and husband go out in the morning she had had no means of intelligence, save to listen to the noise of the battle.

And that grew louder and louder every minute, the reports of the guns more and more incessant, while the rolling rattle of the musketry increased momentarily. It was the very first contest at which the girl had ever been a neat auditor, and she was utterly unused to the sounds of war.

And yet she reasoned from the sounds of battle as correctly as a veteran.

After all it does not take long to acquire that art. First she heard nothing but a distant rumble of cannon. Then it came nearer, and the crackle of musketry was audible. Then both joined together quite plain, and a faint occasional distant yell was heard. Next she looked down from the window, and saw a few women at the doors, peering down the streets. Anon several of them made excited gestures, and she heard the rapid clatter of hoofs. Then came a single mounted soldier down the street, full speed, and went past like a whirlwind. Soon after was a furious burst of cannonading outside, with the sound of a gradually increasing yell, which came nearer and nearer.

Again he offered his arm, and Inez, trembling with vague fear, accompanied him within the precincts of the doomed city.

she thought, and to him she advanced with dignity, throwing back her veil:

The wild buccaneers, rude and reckless as they were generally, shrunk back on all sides in dead silence, and left a free passage for the Governor's daughter to the presence of their chief.

Then Inez spoke in a clear and distinct voice:

"Senior, I am Dona Inez de Mendoza, daughter of the Governor of Panama, and I have come in search of my father. Tell me he is not hurt, but only a prisoner, for the Virgin's sake!"

Then, for the first time, she looked up in the leader's face, and met the eyes of Don Enrique Morganos.

"Is Morgan's face so changed that Inez has forgotten it?" said the buccaneer chief, in a low tone. "Your father was wounded ere I could save him but the surgeon is attending him now."

As he spoke, he dismounted and resigned his horse to an attendant.

"Forward, and pass the orders to occupy the town," he said to those around him. "Keep the men from drinking, for I have news that the Spaniards have poisoned the wine in the town. Search everywhere for the Indian queen, but do no violence to the women. I shall attend the Governor's palace. Bring the wounded Spanish officer thither."

Then he turned to Inez, and offered his arm with a grave courtesy that recognized nothing of the time.

She refused it for a moment, saying:

"Oh, senior, where is my father? Let me see him first."

He shook his head.

"Don Alonzo will be brought to the palace, and you can see him there. But I made a solemn oath, only yesterday, to your husband, and the Spanish chief that, if he harmed Queen Lola of Darien, I would slay every one in Panama, and burn the town. Has she been harmed?"

"I know not of whom you speak, senior," she said, wondering.

"So much the worse," said Morgan, frowning.

"Foul play has been dealt to her, and we bethed the dealers, when I find them."

Again he offered his arm, and Inez, trembling with vague fear, accompanied him within the precincts of the doomed city.

CHAPTER XIV.

PEPITA.

DONA INEZ MENDOZA stood on the aftercastle of the stately galleon San Salvador, and watched, with trembling limbs and ashy face, the hurried efforts of the crew to make sail and escape from the sack of Panama. Selfish and cowardly, as soon as he saw that the fortune of the day was going against his friends, the captain of the guards had given up the contest, without an effort to restore it, and fled from the wavering field at the very moment when a single vigorous charge might have decided it in favor of the Spaniards.

Half-crazed with terror, he had forgotten his wife and every thing but his own safety, galloped to the shore, taken boat, and fled to the galleon on his caution had provided. She was only half-manned with sailors and the few demoralized soldiers who had fled with him, but she was heavily armed and a good sailor, and loaded with all the wealth of the Panama churches.

As he beheld the sails go slowly up, while the vessel swing short over her anchor, the captain's mind was greatly relieved, for he had been in a frenzy of anxiety for fear the enemy should overtake him and spoil his little game.

The bay was full of boats putting off to the various vessels, and several approached the galleon, while their inmates implored to be taken aboard.

To all he returned the same answer.

"There is no room. This is the Governor's ship."

The noise of fighting in the town had died away, to be replaced by the shouts and yell of the buccaneers roving through the streets, intent on plunder. Every minute he expected to hear the hum of a shot from one of the captured batteries firing at the galleon, but still the guns were silent; and at last the anchor left the bottom, the big fore-sail belled out, and the Salvadore stood forth ahead out of the bay among a crowd of boats, standing seaward.

The buccaneers had taken the Spanish guns, and were turning them against their owners!

The fight was virtually over from that moment. As the guns opened their fire on the town, and the shot crashed through the houses, the street became full of fugitives, fleeing in the wildest disorder. Inez, standing with clasped hands in the gateway, saw officer and soldier alike fleeing like cowards, and was recognized by many, who cried:

"His excellency's daughter! Fly, senora, the pirates are coming in millions! We must flee to the woods or go to sea! Come with us, senora! The foreign devils will eat you alive!"

As she heard the words, her heart beat with terror.

"Stay there, Pepita! The foreign devils will eat you alive!"

"You bet!" Rackensack replied, decisively, "and Kangaroo that is one of 'em too. I was an honest man afore I run afoul of the devils, but they 'suaded me into jining 'em, but my conscience is a-gittin' tender, an' I can't travel with them 'pilgrims' no longer, so I makes a clean breast of it."

And the cannonade had quite ceased.

Then Inez knew, as well as the great captain could have told her, that the day had gone against her countrymen.

What was she to do, whither to fly?

The small-arms announced that her father must be still resisting, after the loss of his guns, with the remainder of his infantry; but the enemy should overtake him and spoil his little game.

As he beheld the sails go slowly up, while the vessel swing short over her anchor, the captain's mind was greatly relieved, for he had been in a frenzy of anxiety for fear the enemy should overtake him and spoil his little game.

"Stay there, senora," he muttered. "You have your reward, but I have mine too. 'Tis always well to have two strings to your bow."

"Stay there, Pepita! The foreign devils will eat you alive!"

"You bet!" Rackensack replied, decisively, "and Kangaroo that is one of 'em too. I was an honest man afore I run afoul of the devils, but they 'suaded me into jining 'em, but my conscience is a-gittin' tender, an' I can't travel with them 'pilgrims' no longer, so I makes a clean breast of it."

And the cannonade had quite ceased.

Then Inez knew, as well as the great captain could have told her, that the day had gone against her countrymen.

What was she to do, whither to fly?

The small-arms announced that her father must be still resisting, after the loss of his guns, with the remainder of his infantry; but the enemy should overtake him and spoil his little game.

"Stay there, Pepita! The foreign devils will eat you alive!"

"You bet!" Rackensack replied, decisively, "and Kangaroo that is one of 'em too. I was an honest man afore I run afoul of the devils, but they 'suaded me into jining 'em, but my conscience is a-gittin' tender, an' I can't travel with them 'pilgrims' no longer, so I makes a clean breast of it."

And the cannonade had quite ceased.

Then Inez knew, as well as the great captain could have told her, that the day had gone against her countrymen.

What was she to do, whither to fly?

The small-arms announced that her father must be still resisting, after the loss of his guns, with the remainder of his infantry; but the enemy should overtake him and spoil his little game.

"Stay there, Pepita! The foreign devils will eat you alive!"

"You bet!" Rackensack replied, decisively, "and Kangaroo that is one of 'em too. I was an honest man afore I run afoul of the devils, but they 'suaded me into jining 'em

MY UNCLE JAKE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

My old, eccentric uncle Jake!
At the thought of his name memories wake!
I often see him now,
Though I was young when he was old,
He had a soul of warmest mold,
And quite a frosty pow.

A very jolly man was he,
As our many a man can be,
Could laugh and have his jokes,
Could kiss the girls and pinch the boys;
It did you good to hear his voice,
Or see him sit and smoke.

He once had wed. He used to say
The girls were "Heaven's obey,"
I answered by mistake:
This little piece of thoughtlessness
Brought much hymeneal distress
Unto your uncle Jake."

Friends and physicians could not save
My uncle Jake from looking grave;
When he this would recall:
But then, he'd wink an eye at me,
And "Make a note of this," said he,
"Nor write it very small."

His hearing by and by got bad;
While I was still a little lad;
It always made my horse
To tell him it was time for tea—
Yelling with all the voice in me,
And shaking him with force.

Then he'd look up. "Why, I'll be bound
It's master Joseph! Come around
And try this other ear;
I fear my hearing, once so fine,
May be beginning to decline—
Come, whisper louder, dear."

His hearing got so very small
That soon he couldn't hear at all.
"It seems to me," he'd say,
"The world of late has grown more quiet,
There isn't half the noise and riot
That was in my young day."

We passed the fort one day at noon;
We saw the fire in the midday sun
Of fifteen degrees here;
"What won't be next?" said he; "I'll know,
They've got to making cannon now
That go without a roar!"

Poor uncle Jake has passed away;
To him, on't up own head's gray;
I mind any old rhyme,
I lately waded to the tomb,
Where he waits the tramp of doom—
For which I've some concern.

Just Saved.

A STORY OF A WOMAN'S HATE.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

AUSTINE CRAIGSTONE sat beside the open window, through which came in the summer wind, laden with perfumy breaths. Her fair, shapely hands lay idly upon an unfolded letter, and she seemed as if she were thinking very intently upon what it contained. And it must have been a strange mixture of gratification and discontent the letter gave her if one judged by the flush of triumph in her eyes, then by the sneering curl of anger and contempt on her lips. And in very truth Austine Craigstone was stirred to the depths of her scheming soul by that innocent missive that she had torn open with such feverish haste, and found it contained just what she wanted it to contain, just what she feared it might possibly not contain.

An invitation to her younger sister's elegant home, for a month, seconded by her sister's husband—Warne Datur—that was all it was; and yet Austine's fingers clenched the letter till she drove the fibret-shaped nails into the quivering palm; and even then the pain was bliss compared to the mad whirlwind of agony that was tearing over her heart. It was simply this—and Austine's face darkened as she recalled it all. Warne Datur, this elegant, courtly man, who had married her sister Lillian, had once—before Lillian, in her winsome, sunshiny way, crossed his path—been Austine's own betrothed, whom she had loved with all the wild, fierce passion of heart so fiery as hers was; for whose sake she had dreamed sweetest dreams of the day when she should be mistress of his magnificent home, and share his wealth, and bear his name.

She was terribly proud and ambitious, this Austine Craigstone, and when the blow fell, and she knew Lillian had usurped her place, it stunned her with its suddenness into the very silence and lethargy that was the best aid to the lovers to assist their plans of a speedy marriage.

So Austine, poor, proud, vengeful, was left to try over again her chances for a brilliant marriage. So, scarce knowing whether it were love or hatred she entertained for Warne Datur, so curiously and awfully were the two emotions blended, Austine went away from old friends, old associations, that kept everlastingly reminding her of it all.

Away to an old aunt's of her father, in a shady, quiet farmhouse, where the honeysuckle climbed and peeped in all the windows, and the buckwheat fields waved and whitened all around them. A sweet, restful place, that should have quieted the eternal turmoil in her heart; a peaceful spot where had come to her a gift whose acceptance of it would have made her past life a soft penitence, her future a bright hope—the love that John Hunter had offered her; the love her beautiful face had inspired in a man whose first love-story was read to Austine Craigstone.

He was one of "Nature's noblemen" grave, dignified, somewhat reticent; so kind, so unselfish, so thoroughly the gentleman; and all this perfect manhood had laid itself, with its own peculiarly proud humility, at Austine Craigstone's feet, at the feet of this woman who loved her sister's husband; this beautiful woman who would not reach forth her hand to take the good the gods offered, but who desperately clung to that other face whose memory, like climes of music, sounded continually in her soul.

Yes, she would go to her sister's house—to Warne Datur's house, that which would have been hers, with all its elegancies, had it not been for Lillian Craigstone's face. Austine hated her more than any of them; for the time, she verily believed she despised John Hunter when she compared him with Warne Datur.

Yes, she would go; and if there was left a trace of her influence over him, she would use it over Warne Datur, be consequences what they might.

And there never was a trembling of the fingers as Austine answered her sister's letter; there was never a qualm of conscience as to "consequences," or a fearful looking to what might result.

No reproaching, haunting memory of winsome Lillian in her wifely security, or of John Hunter, who dreamed she was little less than an angel; to whom he had given his all; of whom he would receive—what? apples of ashes?

And Austine? With a radiance in her eyes that made their violet depths seemathomless, and a quiet grace in all her movements that strangely belied the wild elation in her heart, went about her few preparations—made ready in her few but skillful weapons that she would

remorselessly use to murder what happiness lay between her and—Warne Datur.

not bear it! Oh, my darling, let it be her who goes and I who stays!"

They heard a quick step, and an exclamation of utter horror.

"My God—what do you dare to suggest?

I thank him my eyes are opened."

And, never heeding her pitiful call, Warne walked—into his wife's arms.

John Hunter looked on, his grand face stony

with the unutterable anguish of his soul; and then, by a great effort of will, he quietly went

forward to meet Austine Craigstone.

"It is over between us forever!"

He thrust the words at her almost fiercely;

she gave a cry of fright and alarm, mingled

with keenest shame and amazement, and then,

when John Hunter had turned to rejoin Warne

and Lillian, she fled away up the dusky forest

path as if a thousand avengers were on her

track.

Only a little later, while husband and wife

were settling their first and only difference, and

Mr. Hunter paced the piazza in terrible quietude

of spirit, there came up a sudden, heavy shower,

with awful flashes of red-gold lightning, and

reverberating echoes of intense thunder sounds.

And a little later still, they brought her home,

pale and dead, with a blue ring marking the

fatal path of the lightning as it circled her

slippery throat.

I say, "Just Saved." Is it not so? Even if

she was sacrificed, who would have sacrificed

all the love of John Hunter's heart, all the human

happiness of her sister, Lillian, for the sake

of Warne Datur's love?

So, they three were "just saved." And of

Austine—there may have been mercy reserved.

It Might Have Been.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

It was an October day.

Not a bright, glowing, glorious October day, when hazy, purple mists roll off in the distance, and dreamy sunshine starts the foliage into its most vivid tints of red, and yellow, and rich browns—but a drizzling, dreary, chilly autumn day, with an east wind blowing the smoke down all the chimneys where fires sputtered and struggled feebly, giving out very little of either cheer or warmth.

Algeron took the alarm and roused himself with unbroken alacrity. Duke Norton would be only too happy to supplant him in more than this horseback ride, as he very well knew.

"And you are determined to be dislodging.

Very well, Mr. Howe, suit yourself. I thought

proper to give you the first opportunity, although Duke Norton asked for the pleasure

which you evidently consider a bore. I actually fibbed by telling him I was already engaged

—true in one sense—but it's not too late to

remedy that, I dare say."

Algeron took the alarm and roused himself with unbroken alacrity. Duke Norton would be only too happy to supplant him in more than this horseback ride, as he very well knew.

"I was thinking of your comfort, my dear.

Of course I'm at your service entirely and willingly."

"Yes, 'at my service,' and that's all," said

Miss Daly to herself as she buttoned to her

habit. "I almost imagine I was a simpleton to

quarrel with Duke because he said hard things of him. Dear Duke! He was honest to the

core. But then Algeron is so handsome, and if he only wasn't so wretchedly submissive—just like a poodle-dog which licks the hand that slaps it. Why can't men have a particle of spirit, I'd like to know?"

Very contradictory, was it not, for Katrine to be finding objection to the very condition she so strenuously imposed? But the truth was she had been deluded into accepting Algeron after a certain lovers' quarrel arising from her unquestionable flirtation with him, in which Duke Norton had been an interested participant. And now her wayward heart was going back to its old allegiance; and had Mr. Howe but known what a straw might set all his calculations adrift, he would have hesitated before writing the long-deferred letter to Lulu, which should break their engagement—the first encounter upon the longest in existence. Quite time he was writing it, as he did, hurriedly, while waiting for Katrine, for the day which should make him Lulu's husband had been set just one month hence, and in the six weeks' time since he parted from her, he had become the affianced wife of Katrine Daly. That much for mercenary promptings.

"Not ready, Algeron? I thought it was

the province of you gentlemen to be kept waiting."

"Quite ready, Katrine." He sealed the envelope and slipped it into his pocket as he spoke, answering her careless glance at it with all the baste of a guilty conscience. "A note to my tailor, my dear. These tradespeople are vexatiously impudent, and, contrary to my

custom, I left a bill standing. We'll meet the postman if I am not amiss in my calculations."

To himself he was thinking, "She's inclined to be so deucedly exacting she might press

awkward questions if she saw the address."

Katrine was in wild spirits during that ride, and break the little one's heart, like as not, by being unfaithful to her. That's the way all the world over, and there's no use grumbling at fate. A fellow's really obliged to marry rich nowadays, and I'll have to sacrifice myself along with all the others that do it. What should the charming Katrine say if she knew what a sacrifice it is, I wonder? It's another case illustrated by the boy who had money and no pocket-book to put it in—bought a pocket-book, and then had no money to keep in it. I love Lulu and I can't marry her, and I'll marry Katrine without caring two straws for her. It's fortunate she said yes so willingly; I'd have given up the struggle in disgust if it had been harder to win. It would be awkward now if she should get a hint of affairs as they stand—

to be the fiance of two expectant damsels, and the wedding-day set with both of 'em, is rather ticklish predicament. I'd ought to have broken with Lulu before this, but somehow I've been led to her, and I don't know what I'd do if I were to do it; and I didn't have any idea Katrine would be willing to rush matters so. I'll do it this very day, though—it's not safe to put it off, with the chance of a row at the last."

A pair of metallic high-heels clattered down the stairway at that, the door flew back with a brawny rush, and Miss Daly herself appeared in the abrupt and noisy fashion which was a continual trial to her accepted lover.

"You mentioned the name of 'Austine,' Mrs. Datur. It is odd, and very musical. I never knew but one 'Austine.' She is very precious to me."

Lillian looked at him quickly. There was a tender light in his eyes that lingered even after he spoke.

"In our family it is common; it is the feminine for Austin. My sister is Austine—Miss Craigstone."

"Is it possible? Austine your sister, Mrs. Datur? I wonder if you may congratulate me?"

He spoke hurriedly, impulsively, two rare

conditions of speech for John Hunter; and Lillian, who knew him so well, knew what a hold

her sister had taken of this man's affections.

And Austine was not worthy; Lillian felt

that, and so, when she lifted her face to Austin's lover, he wondered why it was so sad—why her eyes seemed full of unshed tears. Did it mean he was rejected?

Al, if it had meant no more than that!

But he could not take his answer from Austine's sister; and she would not tell him what grieved her so sorely; and so they rode on, in swift quietude.

"This road leads to our only showplace, Mr. Hunter. Would you like to see Sylvan Spring by moonlight? It will repay you your trouble, I think."

And so he turned the ponies' heads, and drove

on to his fate.

At the rustic gate they alighted and tread

softly on the turfy grass, with the distant murmur of some hidden voices coming now and then to their ears.

Lillian grasped his arm, and laid her finger

on her white lips to enjoin silence.

And then they heard the sweet voice of Austine Craigstone.

"But, Warne, you will not send me back? Oh, keep me always where you are, Warne, for I can not forget!"

"We should forget and forgive, Austine. For Lillian's sake—"

Her voice interrupted him, sharp and shrill in its love madness.

"Warne, she has come between us, and I can

sky was an unbroken sheet of gray, and that chilly East wind blew the leaves down in clouds from the dismantling forests. Miss Daly thumped at the piano unmercifully, watching the outdoor aspect, and quite unmindful of the agony her lover was enduring under the storm of discord her reckless touch called forth. He dropped his hands over hers at last, as they flew over the white keys, with a face of ludicrously pitiful appeal.

"Katrine, what is the matter with you this morning? I certainly never knew you to play so badly. Do have mercy on a soul to harmony attuned."

She wheeled about so suddenly as to almost

stop his breath.

"That's just it. 'A soul to harmony attuned,' and it has just come to me, in some inexplicable way, that you and I don't harmonize. I actually believe you'd rebel against me if you only dared. You always act under protest to any wish of mine—and I'm just unreasonable enough not to be satisfied with any thing except the blindest and most unquestioning devotion."

"And you have it from me. I am your slave, your worshiper, your devoted follower. I'm ready to swear fealty—to prove it any way you like."

"How glad I am." Certainly this Miss Daly

was an odd creature, for she laughed outright